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CANADIANA

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Readings Booklet

January 1994



English 33

Part B: Reading

Grade 12 Diploma Examination

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January 1994
English 33 Part B: Reading
Readings Booklet
Grade 12 Diploma Examination

Description

Part B: Reading contributes 50% of the total English 33 Diploma Examination mark.

There are 7 reading selections in the Readings Booklet and 70 questions in the Questions Booklet.

Time allotted: 2 hours. You may take an additional 1/2 hour to complete the examination if needed.

Instructions

- Be sure that you have an English 33 Readings Booklet **and** an English 33 Questions Booklet.
- You may **not** use a dictionary, thesaurus, or other reference materials.



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- I. Questions 1 to 11 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from a play.

from THE WINSLOW BOY

The play from which the following excerpt is taken is based on an actual legal case. In 1908, a 14-year-old boy was accused of stealing and cashing a money order, and was dishonorably discharged from the British naval academy he was attending. In the excerpt, RONNIE WINSLOW is the accused naval cadet; SIR ROBERT MORTON is the highly reputable lawyer who is questioning RONNIE. Also present are RONNIE's parents, GRACE and ARTHUR. SIR ROBERT has asked them to remain silent.

The setting is the Winslow residence at a time prior to the trial.

SIR ROBERT: How old are you?

RONNIE: Fourteen and seven months.

SIR ROBERT: You were, then, thirteen and ten months old when you left the Royal Naval College at Osborne; is that right?

5 **RONNIE:** Yes, sir.

SIR ROBERT: Now I would like you to cast your mind back to July 7th of last year. Will you tell me in your own words exactly what happened to you on that day?

RONNIE: All right. Well, it was a half-holiday, so we didn't have any work after lunch. Until study at seven—

10 **SIR ROBERT:** Study at seven?

RONNIE: Yes. Just before lunch I went to the Chief Petty Officer and asked him to let me have fifteen and six¹ out of what I had in the College Bank—

SIR ROBERT: Why did you do that?

RONNIE: I wanted to buy an air pistol.

15 **SIR ROBERT:** Which cost fifteen and six?

RONNIE: Yes, sir.

SIR ROBERT: And how much money did you have in the College Bank at the time?

RONNIE: Two pounds three shillings.²

SIR ROBERT: After you had withdrawn the fifteen and six, what did you do?

20 **RONNIE:** I had lunch.

SIR ROBERT: Then what?

RONNIE: I went to the locker-room and put the fifteen and six in my locker, and went to get permission to go down to the post office. Then I went to the locker-room again, got out my money, and went down to the post office.

Continued

¹fifteen and six—fifteen shillings and six pence

²Two pounds three shillings—Before the British changed to the decimal system in the 1970s, there were 20 shillings to the pound and 12 pence to the shilling.

25 **SIR ROBERT:** I see. Go on.

RONNIE: I bought my money order and went back to college. Then I met Elliott and he said: "Someone's broken into my locker and pinched a money order. I've reported it to the Petty Officer." Then, just before study, I was told to go along and see Commander Flower. The woman from the post office was there, and the Commander said: "Is this the boy?" and she said, "It might be. I can't be sure. They all look so much alike." Then she said: "I only know that the boy who bought a money order for fifteen and six was the same boy that cashed one for five shillings." So the Commander said: "Did you buy a money order for fifteen and six?" And I said, "Yes," and then they made me write Elliott's name on an envelope, and compared it to the signature on the money order—then they sent me to my quarters, and ten days later I was expelled.

SIR ROBERT: I see. (*He rises. Quietly.*) Did you cash a money order belonging to Elliott for five shillings?

RONNIE: No, sir.

40 **SIR ROBERT:** Did you break into his locker and steal it?

RONNIE: No, sir.

SIR ROBERT: And that is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

RONNIE: Yes, sir.

SIR ROBERT: Right. When the Commander asked you to write Elliott's name on an envelope, how did you write it?

RONNIE: I wrote: "Charles K. Elliott."

SIR ROBERT: Charles K. Elliott. Did you by any chance happen to see the forged money order in the Commander's office?

RONNIE: Oh, yes. The Commander showed it to me.

50 **SIR ROBERT:** Before or after you had written Elliott's name on the envelope?

RONNIE: After.

SIR ROBERT: After. And did you happen to see how Elliott's name was written on the money order?

RONNIE: Yes, sir. The same.

55 **SIR ROBERT:** The same? Charles K. Elliott?

RONNIE: Yes, sir.

SIR ROBERT: When you wrote on the envelope—what made you choose that particular form?

RONNIE: That was the way he usually signed his name.

60 **SIR ROBERT:** How did you know?

RONNIE: Well—he was a friend of mine—

SIR ROBERT: That is no answer. How did you know?

RONNIE: I'd seen him sign things.

SIR ROBERT: What things?

65 **RONNIE** (*Reluctantly*): Bits of paper.

Continued

SIR ROBERT: Bits of paper? And why did he sign his name on bits of paper?

RONNIE: I don't know.

SIR ROBERT: You do know. Why did he sign his name on bits of paper?

RONNIE: He was practising his signature.

70 **SIR ROBERT:** And you saw him?

RONNIE: Yes.

SIR ROBERT: Did he know you saw him?

RONNIE: Well—yes—

SIR ROBERT: In other words, he showed you exactly how he wrote his signature?

75 **RONNIE:** Yes. I suppose he did.

SIR ROBERT: Did you practise writing it yourself?

RONNIE: Yes. It was only for a joke—

SIR ROBERT: Never mind whether it was for a joke or not. The fact is, you practised forging Elliott's signature.

80 **RONNIE:** It wasn't forging—

SIR ROBERT: What do you call it, then?

RONNIE: Writing.

SIR ROBERT: Very well. Writing. Whoever stole the money order and cashed it also wrote Elliott's signature, didn't he?

85 **RONNIE:** Yes.

SIR ROBERT: And, oddly enough, in the exact form in which you had earlier been practising writing his signature.

RONNIE (*Indignantly*): I say! Which side are you on?

90 **SIR ROBERT** (*Snarling*): Don't be impertinent! (*He consults a document.*) Are you aware that the Admiralty sent up the forged money order to Mr. Ridgley-Pearce—the greatest handwriting expert in England?

RONNIE: Yes.

SIR ROBERT: And you know that Mr. Ridgley-Pearce affirmed that there was no doubt that the signature on the money order and the signature you wrote on the envelope were by one and the same hand?

95 **RONNIE:** Yes.

SIR ROBERT: And you still say that you didn't forge that signature?

RONNIE: Yes, I do.

SIR ROBERT: In other words, Mr. Ridgley-Pearce doesn't know his job?

100 **RONNIE:** Well, he's wrong, anyway.

SIR ROBERT: When you went into the locker-room after lunch, were you alone?

RONNIE: Yes.

SIR ROBERT: And you knew which was Elliott's locker?

RONNIE: Yes. Of course.

105 **SIR ROBERT:** Why did you go in there at all?

RONNIE: I've told you. To put my fifteen and six away.

SIR ROBERT: Why?

Continued

RONNIE: I thought it would be safer.

SIR ROBERT: It was rather an odd thing to do, wasn't it? The money was perfectly
110 safe in your pocket. Why did you suddenly feel yourself impelled to put it away
in your locker?

RONNIE (*Plainly rattled*): I tell you I don't know.

SIR ROBERT: Was it because you knew you would be alone in the locker-room at
that time?

115 **RONNIE:** No.

SIR ROBERT: Where was Elliott's locker in relation to yours?

RONNIE: Next to it but one.

SIR ROBERT: Next but one. What time did Elliott put his money order in his locker?

RONNIE: I don't know. I didn't even know he had a money order in his locker. I
120 didn't know he had a money order at all.

SIR ROBERT: Yet you say he was a good friend of yours—

RONNIE: He didn't tell me he had one.

SIR ROBERT: How very secretive of him. (*Makes note on document.*) What time
did you go to the locker-room? Was it directly after lunch?

125 **RONNIE:** Yes, I think so.

SIR ROBERT: What did you do after leaving the locker-room?

RONNIE: I've told you. I went for permission to go to the post office.

SIR ROBERT: What time was that?

RONNIE: About a quarter past two.

130 **SIR ROBERT:** Lunch is over at a quarter to two. Which means that you were alone in
the locker-room for half an hour?

RONNIE: I wasn't there all that time—

SIR ROBERT: How long were you there?

RONNIE: About five minutes.

135 **SIR ROBERT:** What were you doing for the other twenty-five?

RONNIE: I don't remember.

SIR ROBERT: It's odd that your memory is so good about some things and so bad
about others—

RONNIE: Perhaps I waited outside the C.O.'s office.

140 **SIR ROBERT** (*With searing sarcasm*): Perhaps you waited outside the C.O.'s office.
And perhaps no one saw you there, either?

RONNIE: No. I don't think they did.

SIR ROBERT: What were you thinking about outside the C.O.'s office for twenty-
five minutes?

145 **RONNIE** (*Wildly*): I don't even know if I was there. I can't remember. Perhaps I
wasn't there at all.

SIR ROBERT: No. Perhaps you were still in the locker-room rifling Elliott's
locker—

Continued

- 150 **RONNIE** (*Makes a slight move in to table*): I remember now. I remember. Someone did see me outside the C.O.'s office. A chap called Casey. I remember I spoke to him.
- SIR ROBERT**: What did you say?
- RONNIE**: I said: "Come down to the post office with me. I'm going to cash a money order."
- 155 **SIR ROBERT** (*Triumphantly*): Cash a money order!
- RONNIE**: I mean get.
- SIR ROBERT**: You said cash. Why did you say cash if you meant get?
- RONNIE**: I don't know.
- SIR ROBERT**: I suggest cash was the truth.
- 160 **RONNIE**: No, no. It wasn't. It wasn't really. You're muddling me.
- SIR ROBERT**: You seem easily muddled. How many other lies have you told?
- RONNIE**: None. Really I haven't.
- SIR ROBERT** (*Bending forward malevolently*): I suggest your whole testimony is a lie.
- 165 **RONNIE**: No! It's the truth.
- SIR ROBERT**: I suggest there is barely one single word of truth in anything you have said either to me, or to the Judge Advocate, or to the Commander. I suggest that you broke into Elliott's locker, that you stole the money order for five shillings belonging to Elliott, and you cashed it by means of forging his name.
- 170 **RONNIE** (*Wailing*): I didn't. I didn't.
- SIR ROBERT**: I suggest that you did it for a joke, meaning to give Elliott the five shillings back, but that when you met him and he said he had reported the matter that you got frightened and decided to keep quiet.
- RONNIE**: No, no, no. It isn't true.
- 175 **SIR ROBERT**: I suggest that by continuing to deny your guilt you are causing great hardship to your own family. (*Leaning forward and glaring at RONNIE with utmost venom.*) I suggest that the time has come for you to undo some of the misery you have caused by confessing to us all now that you are a forger, a liar and a thief. (*GRACE rises.*)
- 180 **RONNIE** (*In tears*): I'm not! I'm not! I'm not! I didn't do it. (*GRACE crosses swiftly down to RONNIE and envelops him.*)
- ARTHUR**: This is outrageous, sir.
- SIR ROBERT** (*To ARTHUR and GRACE*): The boy is plainly innocent. I accept the case. (*He walks languidly³ to door, gives a polite nod and goes out. RONNIE continues to sob hysterically.*)
- 185

Terence Rattigan
English Playwright

In 1948, *The Winslow Boy* won the
New York Drama Critics' Award.

³languidly—wearily

II. Questions 12 to 18 in your Questions Booklet are based on this poem.

MRS. ROWLEY

The old gas bag, we called her. Came on Thursday
Mornings, fat and panting, to the back door,
Ten-thirty to the minute, smiling, eyes
Enormous behind her glasses, hair askew,

- 5 And sat at the kitchen table, catching her breath.
Mrs. Rowley from the grocer's shop,
Taking orders from her regulars,
But really out to talk, to share the news.

- Took out her black book, fussing for it
10 In her bag, chatted for twenty minutes
Until, on some unknown cue, she'd lick the purple
Indelible¹ pencil and slowly get to work.

- Same as last week for the tinned fruit, is it,
Dear? We've got a new line of puddings in*
15 *And I thought of you . . .* All done, she heaved
Her bulk upward, stumped down the back steps

- And wheezed happily away, losing herself
In the long streets like a soft giant ghost.
Mrs. Rowley, gas bag, figure of fun
20 In a child's world, back to her corner shop,

To custard-powder, potted meat and spices.
The next morning, a huge brown box of food
Would somehow appear at our door, as if from on high,
Fragrant, packed lovingly. Those fat fingers!

- 25 Until she stopped coming. One day she just stopped.
Big, gossiping, slow-walking Mrs. Rowley
Came no more to talk, to make the food
Appear without a sound on our white scrubbed steps.

Continued

¹Indelible—non-erasable

Mrs. Rowley, the gas bag, up, up, and up,
30 Up over the city, high and away, out
Of our lives, past new dark clouds coming in;
Mrs. Rowley sailing, towing her time

Behind her, wheezing not at all as she soared,
Pulling away a world of gentleness,
35 A world of slowness and great courtesy,
A world where words were spoken and food was there.

Christopher Wiseman
Alberta poet, born in Great Britain.
He teaches at the University of Calgary.

III. Questions 19 to 28 in your Questions Booklet are based on this article.

QUITE A LITTLE CITY

The awkward looking little burrowing owls hopped around the workmen, watching them as they drove wooden stakes into the scrub-grass and weeds that covered their subterranean homes. The presence of the men, their trucks and their steady tap-tap-tapping didn't ruffle the feathers of the threatened underground dwellers.

The workmen thought the ookpik-like¹ birds must be accustomed to noise and disturbance. The owls, each of whom is barely the size of a workman's hand, live along the edge of the arterial highway that connects Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, with the Trans Canada Highway a few kilometres to the north. The roadside median was "an eyesore," according to the owner of the nearby Heritage Inn hotel, and he had successfully lobbied the city to install irrigation pipes and grass "to beautify the entrance to the city."

If the median was an eyesore for some, it was home for the burrowing owls. The weeds that bothered the sensitivities of the hotel owner provided one of the few refuges left for the owl that once could be found across the prairies.

Driven from the prairie by

intensive farming practices that destroy their underground burrows, the remaining *Athene cunicularia* in Saskatchewan have flocked to a small nesting area southeast of Regina and to the fields, road allowances and golf courses around Moose Jaw. Here they can find the last remnants of shortgrass prairie, the environment they need to hunt and live in.

The city moved quietly at first to irrigate and develop the owls' home. The first public mention of the project came in a little note in the *Moose Jaw Times Herald's* coverage of a spring city council meeting. City officials would recall later that the project simply seemed like a good idea at the time.

Mildred Tulloch of the Moose Jaw Natural History Society didn't agree. She'd been one of Moose Jaw's first "owl watchers" a decade earlier when the little birds began migrating into the city. She's normally a quiet woman, prone to a trace of shyness and the self-effacement that you often find in people in small prairie towns. But when you ask Mildred about the owls, the transformation is startling. Gone is the quiet style. In its place

Continued

¹ookpik-like—The ookpik is an owl-like symbol of the Canadian north, often sold as a stuffed toy.

is an assertive, self-taught naturalist who thinks the burrowing owls have about the same rights as any other family that chooses to make Moose Jaw its home.

Mildred started making telephone calls. One of the first people she called was another long-time owl watcher, Byron Crabb, a Moose Jaw veterinarian. He shared her outrage and he called Ed Begin, the executive director of the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation. It would be the first of many calls to Begin from angry owl watchers.

"The bloody phone was ringing off the wall for awhile," he remembers. "Some people were from organizations like the natural history society, a lot were hunters and fishermen. But most were people you couldn't attach to any organization, just plain folks who cared."

Ed Begin wasn't the only one in Moose Jaw who began hearing bells. Every member of city council got calls from passionate owl watchers who were, in the words of one alderman, "simply outraged that the city was going to hurt the owls."

"It's quite a little city we have here," says Moose Jaw Mayor

Scoop Lewry. "They care about things that are important in life, things like the owls."

Less than a week after deciding to go ahead with the work on the median, city council was calling civic bureaucrats onto the carpet to explain what was going on. The head of the city parks department said people misunderstood the plan, that the project wouldn't really disturb the owls.

Moose Jaw's owl watchers didn't agree. Mildred Tulloch, Byron Crabb and others like them told council members that irrigation would flood burrowing owl nests, that the pesticides used routinely on grass to kill mosquitoes and other insects also kill the grasshoppers that make up the bulk of the owl diet. Clearly, they said, there was no way to go on with the project without destroying the owl habitat.

Moose Jaw is sometimes called the "Owl Capital of Canada" because of the dense urban population of the spindly legged birds. Census estimates compiled by the Moose Jaw Natural History Society put the number of birds at about 200, roughly 10 percent of all the burrowing owls left on the prairies.

Continued

The owls find homes along one of the city golf course roughs, along the scrubby medians of roadways and in the abandoned farmyards that surround the city. In the past decade, the people of Moose Jaw have come to see the owl as a symbol of their quiet prairie city.

Burrowing owls are easy to fall in love with, they say. They're so cute you want to take one home to the kids. In fact, a major problem has been the vandalizing of artificial nesting boxes by children. George Davies is a director of the South Saskatchewan Wildlife Association, a local group of over 500 members. He remembers one incident in which some kids dug up nine families of burrowing owls. Davies, who has built and installed dozens of boxes for the owls, spent two days restoring the nests.

Davies' fondness for the owls transcends love. They have become his obsession. Over the years he's built artificial nests with his own money, using plans he designed himself after researching how the birds build their own nests. He's repaired burrows that were accidentally buried by tractors. He's talked to community groups, to

schools, to anyone who'd listen. He admits he even talks to the owls, mimicking one of the half-dozen voices he's learned as he walks among the birds and works on their nests.

So it was logical that the city would call Davies in to help solve the problem of the "eyesore" entrance to the city that was so important to the safety of the owls. Davies agreed to relocate the owls from the median to a field 200 metres away where he had already installed some artificial nests. He hopes that city council will agree to set aside the land as a permanent refuge for the owls. The South Saskatchewan Wildlife Association will produce brochures and educational materials for schools and for those who want to leave the Trans Canada Highway for a glimpse of one of Canada's most threatened species.

The battle for the burrowing owls in Moose Jaw has brought together hunters and naturalists in a rare show of solidarity. More people than ever are turning out for meetings of both groups as the awareness of nature issues created by the owl controversy grows.

Continued

200 The World Wildlife Fund, which
is financing its own burrowing owl
protection programs elsewhere on
the prairies, says no part of the
Canadian environment has endured
as much change as the three prairie
provinces. Only about 20 hectares
of natural, virgin prairie grassland
remain between the Ontario and
British Columbia borders.
210 Everything else has been ploughed,
cultivated, irrigated or urbanized.

W.O. Mitchell once described the
prairie grasslands as “holding the
skeleton requirements of land and
sky.” But most of that natural

grassland is gone now. Much of the
prairie has become inhospitable to
things like burrowing owls who
depend on the natural prairie for
their own “skeleton requirements.”

220 Natural prairie has given way to
the agro-economic food factory of
modern times. The vast expanse
suitable for bison, burrowing owls,
ducks and geese is gone forever.
But the battle for Moose Jaw’s
burrowing owls may prove that if
people care enough, it might still be
possible, even within towns and
cities, to preserve some part of that
230 natural wonder.

Steve and Florence Krueger
Contemporary Canadian Writers

- IV. This is the first draft of Robin's letter to her cousin Nathan in Winnipeg. Read the letter carefully, noting the revisions, and answer questions 29 to 35 in your Questions Booklet.

January 5, 1994

416 Nalwen Crescent
Nalwen, Alberta
T5J 2J4

Hi Nathan,

Paragraph 1 Congratulations on placing first in the two races at the national indoor track meet.

Way to go! No wonder I could never
~~I was so glad to hear about you're accomplishment. I guess this explains why-~~
~~outrun you.~~
~~-you always beat me when we had races.~~ Anyways, I hope that your visit is still
for the summer. Everyone here is thrilled that a celebrity
on, and that this fame won't go to you're head when you come to Nalwen this
will be visiting Nalwen.
~~summer.~~

Paragraph 2

The last time we talked on the telephone, you
~~You~~ were concerned that plans for a housing project would mean the loss of the
wooded area behind your house. Robins, woodpeckers, and bluejays would
Many animals would be affected. It seems to
be left homeless. Citizen action is the solution. The
~~me that you have to take citizen action as the people of Moose Jaw, did in an~~
attempt to save the home of burrowing owls, in the article I was reading,
showed that citizen
involvement can make a difference.

Paragraph 3

Do you remember the summer you and I visited our grandparents in Winnipeg?
~~and you got sick after raiding Grandma's garden?~~ Along the way we had passed
through Moose Jaw, and just off the Trans Canada Highway we saw the cutest
little owls. Remember how we looked in a bird book and found out that they were

Continued

called burrowing owls? While leafing through an old copy of *Nature Canada*, I was dismayed to read an article discussing just how rare these birds are getting to be. The major problem ^{facing the owls is} being the declining shortgrass prairie.

Paragraph 4 The article ^{described} talked about how ^{infuriated} mad citizens of Moose Jaw called city councillors to ^{protest} complain about the decision to irrigate the owls' weeded area, and city officials had some explaining to do. ^{the owl watchers} It goes without saying that ~~they~~ persuaded city council to reconsider there plans for "improving" the roadside median.

Paragraph 5 I've enclosed the article for you to read. Finding the time may be difficult, though. This information may give you some inspiration on how to work out your environmental concern. Team Canada has probably got you practising night and day for the next Olympic Games!

Looking forward to seeing you in the summer,

Robin

V. Questions 36 to 43 in your Questions Booklet are based on this poem.

SUMMER OF THE BLACK WASPS

Poised on a step-ladder
flashlight in left hand
spray bomb in right
I'm waiting for darkness and
5 the last wasp to enter
the grey nest in my cedar.
I'm a reluctant exterminator
who's read the instructions:
Treat nests preferably at night
10 *when insects are inside*
and will not fly
and I'm not reassured
but I'm waiting for the last wasp
to enter his bunker
15 waiting for the last spaceship
to rendezvous with mission control
waiting for enough nerve
to blast these lethal chemicals
through the only porthole
20 trembling at the thought
of the mass destruction I'll trigger
trying to remember
the confident tones of the chemical:
A two or three-second burst of spray
25 *is usually adequate.*
I'm waiting as the black jackets enter the clubhouse
waiting as they buzz past
on neat horizontal trajectories
purposeful, decisive
30 so unlike the hesitant killer on the scaffold.
but more stragglers arrive
I lose count
I'm harboring all the wasps
in the east end of town

Continued

35 my wife at the window grows impatient
neighbours behind carefully closed windows
cheerfully signal their support
while wagering
how soon I'll be stung
40 how often
& where.

Darkness has come
but technology will triumph
raising high my liquid *excalibur*¹
45 I direct a blast of poison
into the nest's small hole.

But the dusk patrol is still returning
and some of the palace guards
come winging out of the nest!
50 I keep shooting
—Buck Rogers would be proud!
the air is rank with chemicals
dripping from nest, tree & ladder.

Suddenly my wife at open window cries out:
55 *they're in the house*
they're in the house
lurching about I splatter screen, glass & walls
then a pair circles my head
one more spurt & my spray bomb is empty
60 I drop it in terror
dash to the back door
a bumbling assassin
nauseated with chemicals & killing.

Richard Woollatt
Contemporary Canadian Writer

¹*excalibur*—sword of King Arthur

VI. Questions 44 to 55 in your Questions Booklet are based on this article.

The following article appeared in the Atlantic Monthly magazine in 1931.

**THE NEW PILGRIM'S PROGRESS:
AN ODYSSEY OF THE UNEMPLOYED**

After several months of riding freight trains, joining bread lines, sleeping in jails or Salvation Army “flophouses” or box cars, I began to realize that Wall Street had crashed and that unemployment was a national problem. At first I had no idea of the magnitude of the disaster; I saw it all purely in terms of my own
5 personal difficulties. All that I knew was that I had been fired out of an unsatisfactory newspaper job in a suburb of New York City and would have to look for another berth.

After I had failed to find work in New York, I decided to “hit the road.” I had seventeen dollars in my pocket and all I needed to do was to support myself.

10 United States Highway No. 1, which runs along the Atlantic Coast from Maine to Florida, was thronged with pedestrians in January of 1930 when I set out upon it, headed south. There was a sprinkling of adventurers, most of them posing as hatless college boys with Boston bags. Some were disappointed office workers on their way from New York to Miami. A few were obviously just
15 graduating from the Boy Scouts and were indulging their *Wanderlust*. Nine tenths of them, however, were workmen in overalls. By the time I came to the short-leaf pines and open spaces south of Richmond, I had talked with a number of these men and learned that many were heads of families forced away from home by unemployment. Among them were skilled laborers,—carpenters, plasterers,
20 operators of machines,—most of them willing enough to forgo their union status if they could only find some sort of work at any sort of wages. All of these wanderers were trying to hitch-hike their way along, but it was a discouraging business; their numbers had spoiled the sport, and most of them were doing more hiking than hitching.

25 I rode through South Carolina and Georgia in one lucky lift and then made for New Orleans. By this time I had exhausted my slender resources and found myself walking the streets of a strange city without a penny to my name.

I could not have hit upon a worse place than New Orleans at this time. I had arrived in the city at the height of that hysterical season which they call Mardi
30 Gras. From all the corners and hollows of the earth tourists and sight-seers were pouring in, and they were followed by a ragged army of hoboes, bums, street fakers, and touts¹ who converged upon the city from every point of the compass.

Continued

¹touts—people who aggressively solicit customers, especially those people who sell information on racehorses to bettors

While the carnival reigns it is always a problem for the New Orleans police to keep an eye on pickpockets, and this year the depression had made their task doubly difficult.

I had already had several brushes with the police and I knew their attitude. “No visible means of support” is the club they use in sending many an innocent victim to jail for weeks on end. I heard that men were wanted on the banana wharf, unloading the heavy bunches of fruit at thirty-five cents an hour. I applied, only to be told that the jobs had all been taken. As I turned to leave the place, I observed a “No Smoking” sign and put my pipe in my pocket; but a “copper” had seen me and came running up excitedly. After so many weeks of tramping about, I presented anything but a prepossessing appearance. The cop was one of the kind to whom “orders is orders,” and since I had been caught smoking on the sacred banana wharf of New Orleans there was nothing for it but that I must be arrested for investigation. While we were waiting for the patrol wagon, a well-dressed man in the company of a woman passed by smoking a cigarette; my captor politely informed him that smoking was not permitted.

This was the first time I had ever been arrested and it gave me my first introduction to a “bull pen.” I was thrown into a large cell crowded with nearly a hundred prisoners. As I surveyed this pirate’s crew, I tried to pick out the hardened criminals from the mere down-and-outers, and I could not. I was beginning to feel a mental kinship with these underdogs whose circumstances had placed them outside the law.

When my case came up, I was lucky to get a “floater”—a discharge with a warning to leave town within a few hours. Meanwhile I had heard about the Llano del Rio Colony in western Louisiana, near Leesville, which is run as a cooperative venture. There, I was told, I could earn food, clothing, and shelter; they had no unemployment. I determined to go there.

Fifteen years before, Llano was organized on a mud flat which was at that time the site of a deserted lumber camp. Since then hundreds had joined it and left it, but the population still managed to keep ahead of the original group. Everybody except the youngest children worked eight hours a day, receiving no money but sharing all things in common.

In spite of the brave spirit of most of its people, Llano was an unhappy place. The community was full of elderly Middle-Western farmers who had sunk their last dollar into Llano membership and were depressed by the feeling that they were married to the place, for better or for worse, until death did them part. Even the children were a joyless lot. I soon lost whatever enthusiasm I had worked up over their ideas, and in the end I left before I was kicked out.

Even now, as I look back upon it in calm retrospect, I cannot trace the exact route of my vagabondage during those last dreadful months. I have a vivid recollection of my arrival in Cheyenne, Wyoming, in the teeth of a May

Continued

snowstorm. Along with a dozen others, I had spent a cold night riding in a box
75 car. We had lain on the floor in that attitude peculiar to hoboes—knees curled up,
the right hand between them, and the left arm crooked under the head to serve as a
pillow.

I remember, later, coming into the Mojave Desert from San Bernardino. It
grew hotter and hotter until the temperature reached 120 degrees, and I got a place
80 working on the bridge gang.

I shunted here and there along the California coast from San Diego to Eureka,
in the redwood belt. I stayed a month in San Francisco and then took a trip to
Seattle. Conditions, I found, were just as bad in Washington and Oregon as
elsewhere. It was no good trying to go on. Without more ado I resolved to return
85 to New York. Three weeks later I stepped off a moving van on the Manhattan
side of the Holland Tunnel with fifty cents in my pocket.

The metropolitan newspapers were full of stories about unemployment.
Economic articles were invading the Sunday feature sections and the literary
reviews, and even the poets were singing about it. Nobody, however, seemed to
90 know anything about the human side of unemployment. As if a conspiracy were
afoot to hide the truth by subtle distortion, all the newspapers referred to the
unemployed as “the idle.” Well, maybe they were, but I doubt it. For ten months
I was one of them and during that time I worked temporarily in gardens, in
printing shops, in newspaper offices. I carried bricks, shoveled snow, worked on
95 the highways, washed dishes, peeled potatoes, shelled garlic, cooked hamburgers.
I was a packer, a checker, a tally man, a mess boy aboard ship. I mixed lime,
covered doughnuts with sugar, acted as stevedore on the Seattle docks, planted
corn, cucumbers, and other vegetables too numerous to mention. I helped a
carpenter build an addition to a small house, scraped a motor boat, tinkered with
100 Fords, fixed typewriters. And between whiles I was always on the move. Thus it
was to be “idle”!

For me, all this is now a bad dream from which I have waked, but for
countless others it remains the grimmest of realities. And as I walk about New
York in a good “front,” with neat clothes and a clean white shirt, I can still taste
105 the peculiar flavor of mush and molasses; I can still hear the pounding of
locomotives, and feel the coal dust in my eyes.

Robert Whitcomb
American Journalist

VII. Questions 56 to 70 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from a novel.

from THE BUDDHA TREE

Standing on the riverbank behind the school, Ryokun stared at the sheet of water that stretched away almost as far as he could see. The three stone steps where he and his friends would wash their feet when the river was running at its normal level were under water. Where the flood had come from, he did not know.

5 River, dykes, paddy-fields, the patchwork of ridges and raised paths connecting field with field—every landmark up to the edge of Heron’s Forest had disappeared, except for a few fowl-houses sticking up here and there like tiny islands. The hens would be huddling on their perches, unable to move. Driven by a powerful current, the waters swirled past where Ryokun stood. The flood was
10 the immediate result of heavy rain that had fallen in the mountains for several days on end, after the long period of brilliant weather. It happened regularly every two or three years, and was not serious enough to damage the banks of rivers of any size. The farmers were unmoved; they seemed to know by instinct when the water would recede.

15 “Nobu!” Ryokun called to his friend. “The tunnel’ll be full now!” Nobu had been his companion in the underground adventure. The conduit ran directly under where they were standing—Ryokun thought of the floodwater surging through it, and shivered, imagining himself trapped inside. In fact, it was only rarely dry; what had frightened him now was a sudden realisation that except for a few days in
20 the hottest part of the summer there was a sizeable stream flowing through it all the year round. On one of those days of drought he and Nobu had crept through it—like thieves, he thought; he had felt somehow guilty ever since, as if their penetration of its secret had been a crime which was sure to be found out sooner or later. They had never spoken about the conduit to anyone else. The adventure was
25 something they could have boasted about to their classmates, but to talk of it would mean reliving its terrors, and that was something neither of them could face.

“Let’s swim!” said Ryokun. His friend grinned approval. Visions of how exciting it would be to swim on the floodwaters helped to drive out unpleasant memories of the conduit, both ends of which were under water in any case—at the
30 mill, the water-wheel was racing madly, but it was upstream from where they were standing, and unless they deliberately swam near the mill there was no danger of their being sucked into the tunnel. Only a few ears of rice had managed to push themselves above the water in places. Even the willow trees along the dykes looked as if they were struggling to hold on to the flooded soil in a
35 desperate attempt to prevent themselves from being carried away. Though all

Continued

landmarks had vanished, Ryokun knew exactly where the river and the dykes and the little stone bridges were.

40 The boys undressed, hid their clothes and canvas shoes in a corner of the covered way leading back to the school buildings, and dashed down to the flood, Ryokun aiming for the point where the river came closest. With hands raised, he jumped straight in, not trying to dive as he used to do in the swimming-bath. For an instant his feet touched the river-bed, and then the current swept him away. A splash he heard but did not see told him that Nobu had followed him in. Ryokun tried to stand; but his feet were carried away again the moment he pushed them
45 down. Rolling over and over, now on his face now on his side, he drifted rapidly downstream, forgetting everything but the thrill of smooth, effortless movement, of swimming without having to trouble about strokes. Nobu was swimming, too. Both tried to stand at the same moment, and screamed with delight as the current bore them down. Ryokun clutched at any rice-plants that brushed past him on the
50 surface—they came away in his hand.

Ahead, the great expanse of water gradually narrowed to the width of the river, both banks of which were lined with concrete from the beginning of the town area, giving it a stateliness it had not possessed in its wanderings through the fields. If they drifted that far, stopping would be out of the question—and the sea
55 was little more than a mile further down. The adventure would have to end where the houses began. Delight in the swift, effortless floating faded as they realized what lay ahead if they did not stop soon and haul themselves out of the flood.

Ryokun was frightened. Twisting his head round in the water, Ryokun saw a black head close behind him. Nobu, too, was drifting helplessly, no longer
60 capable of struggling against the current, or even of shouting, a floating symbol of despair. The change had come in a moment, as the current swept them into the danger area. Ryokun himself was too frightened now to speak. They would be out of their depth in the deeper water of the town section of the river; and with the water running at its present speed, dog-stroke or any other stroke would be futile.
65 How stupid they'd been to let the delight of riding the current crowd out any thought of danger. Ryokun tried to cry for help, but his voice would not come—and all the time the current was getting faster and faster. He was too frightened now even to kick down at the river-bed. There was nobody in sight anywhere. None of the farmers wanted to come out merely to watch the damage the flood
70 was doing, any more than anybody would want to take a walk now along the submerged paths and ridges, so that both paddy-fields and river were deserted.

Ryokun and his friend were floating in the middle of the river, between the two rows of half-drowned willow-trees. The augmented river current swept them on with a speed and violence of its own, different from the leisurely movement of

Continued

75 the floodwaters over the fields, as if propelled by some secret spring of energy
hidden below the muddied surface. Noiselessly, constantly forming tiny eddies, it
rushed towards the town. Ryokun was desperate. In the midst of his terror, the
futility of his attempts reminded him of frogs he had seen trying to cross the river.
80 They would swim for all they were worth, drifting downstream all the time, but
never giving up. Eventually they would tire, their movements growing more
feeble, and the current would seem to give them a sudden push as if it had been
waiting for that moment— then they would make a last spurt, only to give up the
struggle a moment later, after a few weary strokes, and let the river carry them
where it would. Ryokun might have been such a frog. Exhausted, his hands and
85 feet jerked convulsively. It was certain they would be drowned if they were
carried right into the town area. The river was deeper and the current stronger
there than anywhere upstream and now, with the added impetus of the floodwater
from the mountains, it was racing to the sea with startling speed.

Something like a branch bumped against his hand. It was a rotten willow-
90 stump. He had not seen it, but had been clutching feverishly at the water in a
frantic attempt to find something to hold on to, and now his hand closed round it
instinctively, his whole body swerving out at right angles to the current, so that for
the first time he felt its full impact. Instantly he was tossed out of the main stream
on to the bank, like a leaf in a sudden breath of wind. The bank was under water,
95 but at least he was out of danger. Nobu had caught hold of him around the chest
the moment he himself caught at the stump, so he grabbed at the branches of a
nearby tree, afraid the stump would come away. Neither of them spoke.

After a while the two boys began to wade across the paddy-fields. The fields
formed the inside of a loop in the river, and were bounded on one side by a farm
100 on some raised ground overlooking the bank a little way upstream, which had the
effect of slowing down the flood. Ryokun tried to follow the raised paths. The
water came only up to his thighs, so it was possible to walk, though he kept
stumbling and slipping back into the paddy, finding it hard to keep a foothold on
the muddy ridges. After some minutes he and Nobu managed to reach the dry
105 fields behind the farmhouse. Nobu's lips were blue.

"Couldn't have stood that much longer."

"Mm."

Without another word, the two naked boys cut across the fields, ran past
another farm, and crawled through the bamboo fence surrounding the school
110 grounds. The school was deserted. They dressed quickly, not troubling to dry
their dripping hair. Ryokun put on his shoes, looking back once more at the
scores of submerged paddy-fields. No one in his senses would swim out there
today. He thought of the river, hidden now under the wide sheet of water, but

Continued

115 keeping always to its course; and understood how it came to flow so much faster
than the leisurely roll of the floodwater across the fields.

“See you tomorrow.”

“Bye.”

120 Ryokun ran out of the school grounds and through the temple gate, wanting to
get away from the scene of their adventure. Shoji was working in the compound.
“What’s happened, Ryokun? Your head’s all wet,” he called out.

Mineyo caught him as he slipped into the washroom. “Been swimming, have
you? Do you know how pale you are—and those lips! Look at your hands!” The
palms were white and swollen. Ryokun rubbed them together.

125 “What you mean by going swimming in that flood, when I’ve told you I don’t
know how many times even paddling in the river is dangerous? Suppose you got
carried away, what would happen then?” Ryokun was hurt. For him the terror of
being carried away by the current was not imaginary, but something he and he
alone had experienced, and he resented her speaking so lightly of what she knew
nothing about. He felt like telling her of their adventure in the tunnel—it would
130 probably make her faint with horror.

Mineyo finished rubbing his head and started to change his clothes.

“I shall tell your father!” It was not an empty threat, Ryokun knew; but his
father would merely warn him gently not to do it again. In any case he had learnt
now for himself how dangerous the flood could be.

Fumio Niwa
Japanese novelist, born in 1904

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